

Jeremy Herb, *Star Tribune*

U.S. Rep. Michele Bachmann may not be voting much in Congress lately, but her bill for the new St. Croix River bridge project is taking a step forward this week.

Bachmann's bill, which would grant a required exemption to the federal Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, will be marked up by the House National Resources Committee Wednesday. If the bill passes out of committee, it could then be brought to the House floor.

U.S. Sen. Amy Klobuchar has a companion bill in the Senate. The legislation is backed by Sen. Al Franken, Rep. Chip Cravaack and Gov. Mark Dayton. U.S. Rep. Betty McCollum is opposed to the plan.

The markup follows an April hearing on Bachmann's bill in the House. The congressional action is facing a deadline from Dayton, which was originally set for Sept. 30 but has since been pushed back to November.

Last month, the Coalition for the St. Croix River Crossing sent nearly 20 people to Washington to lobby for the bridge legislation that would green light the proposed \$690 million project to replace the Stillwater Lift Bridge. Opponents want a smaller, alternative bridge.